

Submission
No 305

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

Name: Mrs Marcela Gonzalez

Date Received: 16 June 2021

Terms of Reference: whether the project is subject to the appropriate levels of transparency and accountability that would be expected of a project delivered by a public sector body

When the government creates a private company for managing roads & infrastructures project with the intention to remove the strict scrutiny that otherwise a publicly managed one would have, makes you wonder what level of transparency & accountability will be expected. If majority of that company is then acquired by a Company whose main purpose is to build roads to charge tolls as a way of revenue, I think there is confronting conflict of interest. It totally contradicts the principle of transparency and accountability. As a tax-payer, I have the right to know how these type of projects are managed; the follow the money rule it's untraceable when these projects are handled by this private companies. The handling of this project should not have a similar structure given the investment and the financing required to fund this project.

Terms of Reference: the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio- As a NSW resident, Tax payer, resident of Cammeray and Parent of a child attending a school in Cammeray, I have the right and the obligation to understand how the proposed infrastructure projects will shape the city we live in and how they will be funded. Also as a project Manager, I understand how projects need to be justified with a strong business case. Sadly, the business case for this project has not been made public including the cost benefit ratio hence we cannot comment on the adequacy of it. However, you can argue when the business case is not disclosed, it can only means that either the benefits are overstated or the costs underestimated, in any of these cases, it's imperative that our legislative bodies, represent the interest of a community that has been blatantly disregarded. If the benefits are truly justified, why they have not been made public. The benefits of this project as outlined on the EIS, are very generic ie. "Reduce congestion, create faster, safer and reliable journeys" These objectives are not adequately measured. If an improvement on the journeys is achieved when the project is completed, its likely that the levels of congestion will go back to current levels. This project is fundamentally inducing demand that in turn will offset the benefit that is trying to achieve. There are so many valid arguments against this project,(see Submissions to EIS) which makes even more important to see the business justification and the cost benefits ratio. Please make the business case and the cost benefits ratio public; that way, once it has been properly reviewed, there will be an objective assessment of the adequacy of the business case.